



**About a hundred of personnel of the Multinational Corps Northeast (MNC NE) successfully accomplished the first part of training at the Joint Warfare Centre in Stavanger, Norway.**

The Joint Warfare Centre, subordinated to the Allied Command Transformation, specializes among other things in delivering professional training for soldiers getting ready for NATO missions. For MNC NE personnel, it is in fact the final step within their preparation process for the upcoming mission in Afghanistan.

### **Adequate preparation – the key to success**

Even though the Joint Force Command Brunssum is in lead of so-called Mission Rehearsal Training preparing for the mission, the Joint Warfare Centre is the actual executor of it. The whole training event has been divided into several stages, each of which having a different aim and form. This varied training ensures an adequate level of preparedness and knowledge of all personnel deploying into the mission area. Due to the significant reorganization within the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) structure, the Joint Warfare Centre staff is obliged to train at the same time personnel who will man positions within two commands – the ISAF Headquarters and the ISAF Joint Command. Even though it may be a challenge in many ways, it is also an excellent opportunity for officers and non-commissioned officers from both

## **MNC NE in the Vikings' land**

Written by AG

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headquarters to interact before the mission starts. All in all, there are more than 200 exercise participants, including the MNC NE personnel who will mostly have their jobs at the ISAF Joint Command. Apart from them, there are personnel from the Command Component Land in Heidelberg as well as individuals from other NATO commands and headquarters who will serve in Kabul. An additional advantage of the training is the presence of over a hundred experts in different areas, including more than fifty servicemen having recent experience from Afghanistan. For everybody who will enter the mission area just in two months, it is a superb opportunity to learn "straight from the horse's mouth" and clear up any doubts. Moreover, following the ISAF Commander General Stanley McChrystal's guidance to further develop the cooperation with the Afghan partners, two representatives of the Afghan National Security Forces – the Police and the Army, are also active participants of the training.

### **Heading for Norway**

Early on Sunday morning on 29 November 2009, a hundred uniformed MNC NE servicemen arrived at the Szczecin-Goleniów Airport. For certain, many of them realized that the next time to appear at the airport in such a group would be when setting off for Kabul.

After the check-in and all necessary security procedures, all MNC NE personnel found their seats and were eagerly waiting for the Norwegian adventure. But those who predicted an exercise calendar to be filled up with training events were definitely not mistaken. The final test before the mission was thoroughly planned to fill every single minute with pieces of information that might appear useful in the mission area. They often had no time to notice incredibly beautiful Norwegian nature being more focused on the Afghan reality.

### **Training as Ulsnes**

The first days from 29 November to 3 December 2009 spent at the Joint Warfare Centre in Stavanger, or more specifically in the Ulsnes base, were devoted mainly to so-called Mission Specific Training and Functional Area Training. The opening remarks were delivered by Commander Joint Warfare Centre Lieutenant General Wolfgang Korte, the Officer Directing the Exercise as well as by French Colonel Charles Sevin, Chief Training Team. For each serviceman taking part in the training, a videoconference with the ISAF Commander General Stanley McChrystal was definitely a highlight. In his short address, he expressed his great support for the new staff training for the upcoming mission.

At the beginning of the training, all participants took part in a series of lectures combined with discussions, which allowed for enhancing general situation awareness in Afghanistan. The topics referred to e.g. an overview of the ISAF mission, tasks and challenges, the air operations, Afghan National Security Forces or the issue of Strategic Communication. Afterwards, the experts offered their valuable knowledge and, already in smaller groups, so-called Functional Area Training started. The experts not only briefed about their experiences within different areas of interest (in other words functional areas) but also conducted vivid discussions with the training audience. *"It was worth it, absolutely"*, summarized his training Major Adrian Sileanu, Romanian Army, who will be a staff officer for Logistic Operations in Afghanistan.

*"We have had some interesting briefings so far and we actually managed not to duplicate this effort during our training in Szczecin so there were lots of new things. And we have just finished electronic working practicing today. That is also interesting because we will have some new systems in Afghanistan and we have to get accustomed to them"*

, he explained. Major Bjärke Therkildsen from the Danish Army emphasized the fact that everything taught at the Joint Warfare Centre would be needed in Afghanistan: "

*I will be an operations & training officer at the Director of Staff Office (DOS). For the last few days we have been gathering information about procedures and what our responsibilities are. We were discussing the set-up of the DOS office and learning about different systems used in Afghanistan, for example, the share point portal".*

### Looking forward to seeing what is next

The Mission Specific Training and Functional Area Training constituted the initial part of the whole Mission Rehearsal Training. They allowed for the MNC NE personnel to get deep into the ISAF topic and learn much about tasks and duties assigned to given posts. But it was just a prelude to the training to come. The next step will be so-called Battle Staff Training which will be the first opportunity for the personnel from different commands and headquarters to meet and work together, just like they will do in Afghanistan. As soon as they find themselves in the new functions, the main Mission Rehearsal Exercise will start.

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